

Story: Ngā umanga – Māori business enterprise

Page 3 – Opportunities for Māori enterprise

The motivation for Māori to enter self-employment changed in the late 20th century. While previously Māori had mainly entered self-employment out of necessity, because of job losses and lack of skills in other areas, many Māori were now taking advantage of new opportunities in the marketplace, including those associated with the revitalisation of their language and culture.

The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 became the basis for Crown acknowledgement and resolution of Māori historical grievances. Treaty settlements have provided an investment base and allowed Māori to be more self-reliant.

Agriculture to service

After 1981 the focus of Māori self-employment steadily shifted away from the agricultural sector towards the service sectors. To some degree this mirrored the overall shift in Māori employment away from the primary and manufacturing sectors towards service-oriented sectors.

There was a rapid growth of Māori service industries built on the demand for cultural knowledge, for example film, television and radio, and the music and fashion industries. The advent of Māori-language schooling led to the establishment of a number of Māori publishing companies.

Te Māngai Pāho, established to make funding available for Māori radio stations, and for the production of Māori-language television and radio programmes and music CDs, came into being as a result of a Treaty of Waitangi claim.

Culture and business

In the early 2000s Māori were increasingly using their culture as a point of difference in the creation of new enterprises. This 'Māori renaissance' and public acceptance of Māori culture saw business opportunities established in many sectors of the economy, including retail, tourism, fishing, art and cuisine.

The three Fs

The Māori asset base was once dominated by 'three Fs' in the primary sector – fishing, farming and forestry. While these still hold opportunities, there is a new generation of Māori entrepreneurs who are finding success and opportunities in three new Fs – film, fashion and food.

In tourism – the largest single contributor to export earnings – the Māori culture was increasingly seen as one of the defining points of difference for visitors who wanted an authentic 'Kiwi experience'. Only Māori could deliver a Māori cultural experience.



Iwi Art gallery



Māori tourism at Whakarewarewa



Ngāi Tahu Tourism



Native produce

How to cite this page:

Matene Love and Tyron Love. 'Ngā umanga – Māori business enterprise - Opportunities for Māori enterprise', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 26-Nov-10
URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/nga-umanga-maori-business-enterprise/3>